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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR JWOOD  
OSD FOR MCGRAW  
CG CJTF-101, POLAD, JICCENT

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: QANOONI: MOVING FORWARD FROM SHINDAND

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On September 7, Ambassador and Wolesi Jirga (WJ) Speaker Qanooni discussed how the US should engage the GIROA in the aftermath of the Shindand operation. Qanooni stressed his confidence in the good intentions of the US in Afghanistan and his belief that US military support is essential to Afghan security. Ambassador affirmed USG's commitment to eliminating operational misunderstandings and reducing civilian casualties to the absolute minimum. Qanooni expressed optimism about moving forward from Shindand, citing recent legislative successes and forward momentum in the WJ. END SUMMARY.

#### New Military Strategy

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12. (C) Qanooni did not directly encourage the Ambassador to reach out to other MPs regarding Shindand or suggest a specific strategy of direct engagement with other government officials other than citing recent discussions between Karzai and the Ambassador as a positive step. He said he had blocked introduction of a bill on the regulation of foreign forces from WJ's agenda but did seem concerned that other MPs could continue to use Shindand to leverage support for an anti-coalition bill.

13. (C) Qanooni said that Afghan leadership needs to come to a new consensus on how to define and deal with insurgents. The policy should be fight first, then reconcile, as discussions with insurgents would not yield results if the insurgents felt strong militarily. The Ambassador expressed support for a more coherent national approach to combating Taliban and other insurgents and also agreed that any talks with the enemy must be from a position of GIROA strength.

14. (C) According to Qanooni, insufficient military presence allows Taliban to hide out until the military deploys to another area and then move back into the community. As a result of this pattern, the Afghan people feel abandoned and are afraid to support the coalition. Qanooni also expressed concern that Taliban are encroaching on areas that until recently were secure. The Ambassador agreed that the military effort must be more than moving Taliban around the country and said that the US plans to send more troops to Afghanistan. The Ambassador also shared that the JCMB will soon endorse raising the limit of ANA troops to 134,000.

#### Importance of Telling Our Story

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15. (C) When asked how to move forward from Shindand, Qanooni stressed the need for strategic use of press. He said that the population often receives propaganda from the Taliban but does not hear enough positive news about coalition forces or

detailed information about Taliban atrocities. GIROA silence surrounding Taliban and other insurgent or terrorist activity is as dangerous as the frontline war, argued Qanooni. The Ambassador agreed that advertising Afghan and coalition efforts to secure Afghanistan and also the civilian casualties at the hands of the insurgency is crucial. He said that we look to GIROA to initiate this effort as an Afghan-led media campaign would be more credible to the population.

#### Afghanistan Moving Forward

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16. (SBU) Qanooni expressed pride that the WJ recently passed several bills including the electoral commission and media bills. (To be reported Septel) Qanooni noted that the WJ was working with a new efficiency and a different spirit. He expressed confidence that this productivity would continue. The Ambassador congratulated Qanooni on his accomplishments as leader of the WJ and thanked him for his support of the United States.

WOOD